

January/February 2024

## Eclipse Countdown



*Google satellite image of site. Note, host family farm is outside of image to the right. All road markers have been removed for hosts' privacy.*

Terry and Jeff Menz visited the host family farm to discuss details and setup for the April 8<sup>th</sup> event. At the same time, we dropped off their eclipse t-shirts and glasses for their family. By far the cutest shirt of them all is the size 2T.

Awww... and precious are two words that barely describe how adorable it is! Our hosts selected a different field for us to set up in than we had before.

The field we used in 2017 is unavailable due to the current hay crop that won't be harvested prior to our visit. They

showed us another field pictured above. It is a little further down the road (due west of their home) and is elevated above most of the surrounding land. It has a fence around it and cattle gate culverts into a nearly flat and nearly obstruction free field. The new site might actually have more useable space for parking, porta-potties, and viewing equipment than the previous site.

They do not sell beef from their location anymore. All of their beef is sold by the 1/2 cow and typically up to the Chicago area. They will let us know by mid-March if they happen to have some beef for us to purchase.

They said we could arrive anytime we want. First Contact is at 12:42pm so I figure most folks would want to be ready by then. 11am might be a good arrival time. We should bring our own lunches with us and pick up after ourselves.

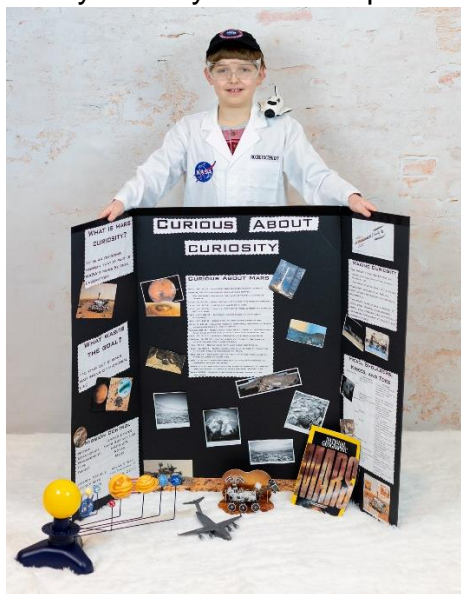
Our host said they will keep an eye on the field and move the event to the area near their house if the grounds are too wet. According to Jeff, "The field has a nice elevation and looks like it drains well so I feel good about it." Make your travel plans and stay on the backroads to avoid the gridlock on the interstates!

# The River's Edge

**Sky Puppies Program:** Closing in on the finish line for this program, we have one participant who has competed all requirements for the Sky Puppy Pin and Certificate. We have a second (and possibly third) participant who is/are getting close to completion.

The group is putting the final touches on their projects and we still have lots of great topics to cover in our sessions including: Black Holes and Supernovas, making a Strange New World and then LARPing in Space. What is LARPing? Google it!

There are many observing requirements as well, as some knowledge gained from our library sessions. We thank our club members who work with the Sky Puppies at outreach events for guiding them to discovering the wonders of the night sky. We also owe our thanks to Louis Latzer Memorial Public Library in Highland, IL for their support for this program. RBAC members are invited to attend the awards ceremony at the library on May 21 at 6:30 pm.



*Titus M. and his Robotic Mission Project.  
(Photo by Cheryl Lombard)*

# Around town

**First Quarter Moon Days:** RBAC offers monthly outreach near the first quarter moon at the Northtown Parking Lot in Highland. Thanks to all who came out on February 19<sup>th</sup>. Skies were mostly clear and the audience was large with an estimated 50 people including a Boy Scout Troop. Our bitter cold January gathering still had 7 visitors who braved the weather. Thanks to all members and visitors who participate in our events!

# By the Way

**2024 Dobfest Planning:** Randy Harrison, Cheryl Brinkmann and Terry and Jeff Menz met with Rangers with the Army Corps of Engineers at the Carlyle Lake Visitors Center to discuss plans for Dobfest 2024. We have reserved the Cole Creek area at Carlyle Lake for Dobfest this year. This area meets the site needs for the event and we will finalize the remaining plans in the coming months. We need volunteers to serve on the planning committee. This committee will be expanded to include the Missouri Clubs we have worked with for past Dobfests including SLAS, ASEM, and EMDSO. We also intend to reach out to other Illinois clubs to join this committee and participate in this event. Contact Terry Menz, Outreach Coordinator, if you are interested or have input to share.

# Dashboard 2023

At the December RBAC Potluck, we celebrated our accomplishments in 2023 by reviewing the Dashboard of our events during the past year.

## RBAC Dashboard

Benchmark	2023	2022	2021
Outreach Events	40	33	13
Event hours	110.75	71	39.5
Venues	29	31	9
Number of Towns	18	19	5
Visitors	3463	1268	655
Member hours	528.25	364	201.5

## Gallery

### First Quarter Moon Night



A visitor to one of RBAC's telescopes on February 19<sup>th</sup> at Northtown in Highland. (Photo by child's parent)



Jeff Menz describes to a visitor what is visible in his telescope. Feb 19<sup>th</sup>. (Photo by child's parent)

### Sky Puppies, Highland



Donna Plocher posted this photo on the Louis Latzer Memorial Public Library's Facebook page: "Sky Puppies was a highlight of 2023 at Latzer Library. Thank you, Jeff and Terry Menz!"



Jeff Menz discusses how filters are used on the Kepler Mission to explore other worlds. (Photo by Krystal Huelsmann)



Lorelei and Jacob explain secret message activity to Titus. (Photo by Krystal Huelsmann).



*Sky puppies experiment with colors and filters. (Photo by Kristal Huelsmann)*



*Taken with ED80 Explorer Scientific scope, Thousand Oak Optics Solar Filter, 6X Reducer/flattener Long Perng ASI290MC Camera, Skywatcher HelioFind Mount (Photo by Randy Harrison)*

## ASTROPHOTOS



*Heart Nebula, Taken with Celestron Rasa 8 Camera; ASI 294 Mc Pro Mount; Sky Watcher EQ6-RPRO; Two hours 10 minutes. (Photo by Randy Harrison)*



*Rosette Nebula Taken with Sky Watcher Esprit 100 Camera; ASI 294 McPro Mount; SkyWatcher EQ6-RPRO Guide Scope; SW EVO50-290mc. One hour 18 minutes. (Photo by Randy Harrison)*

**New Members:** Karl Smith, and Ethan Nance

### Night Sky Network Awards:

Congratulations to the following recipients of the NSN 2023 awards for 5 or more outreach events completed for the year:

37	Jeff Menz
34	Terry Menz
22	Randy Harrison
14	Jim Reagan
10	Spencer Chapman
9	Cheryl Brinkmann
9	Dave Kirsch
9	Karen Fajardo
6	Brandon Runyon
6	Mike Donaldson
5	Dan Brandon
5	Dennis Latinette
5	Kerry Brethauer

### Upcoming Events:

- Eclipse Presentation + Telescopes, Breese Library, Thursday, March 7, 6:30-8:30 pm.
- RBAC Meeting, Salem UCC, Saturday, March 9, 7PM.
- Eclipse Presentation + Telescopes, Glen Carbon Library, Tuesday, March 12, 7-9 pm

- Eclipse Presentation, Granite City Library, Thursday, March 14, 4-5 PM.
- Eclipse Presentation + Telescopes, Edwardsville Children's Museum, Sunday, March 17, 6:30-8:30 pm.



- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Moon Day, Northtown, Highland, Monday, March 18, 7-9 pm.
- Eclipse Presentation + Telescopes, Edwardsville Library, Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2-3:30 pm.
- Girl Scout Volunteer Summit, Collinsville, Saturday, April 6, 10 am -2 pm.
- Total Solar Eclipse, Monday, April 8.



## First Quarter Moon Days

Join the River Bend Astronomy Club for our monthly telescope viewing. Enjoy close views of the craters on our Moon and other night sky objects. Amateur astronomers will have a variety of telescopes, and welcome questions about astronomy!

**Where?** Glik's Northtown parking lot to the south of Mazzio's in Highland

**When?** (All dates are Mondays except 10/21/23, International Observe the Moon Night)

8/21/23	7-10 PM	2/19/24	7-9 PM
9/25/23	7-10 PM	3/18/24	7-9 PM
10/21/23	7-10 PM IOMN	4/15/24	7-10 PM
11/20/23	7-9 PM	5/13/24	7-10 PM
12/18/23	7-9 PM	6/17/24	7-10 PM
1/15/24	7-9 PM	7/15/24	7-10 PM

**What if?** Cancelled when cloudy or weather prohibits.



Find us on 



## Eclipse Presentations - Carlyle, IL



Free Glasses

*\*\* all presentations will be done in conjunction with Case-Halstead Public Library and NASA' Eclipse Ambassador Program*

- March 12, 2024, Carlyle Rotary Club, Noon -Old 50 Cafe
- March 15 - April 9 Carlyle City Park, Story Walk - self-guided eclipse book on the main walkway.
- March 20, 2024, Clinton County Senior Center @ 10:30AM
- April 3, 2024 Case-Halstead Public Library - 6:30PM
- April 5, 2024 CHS Lifeskills Class - 1:30PM
- April 6, 2024 Case-Halstead Public Library - Solar Eclipse Escape Roc Activity - starts at 10AM (all ages – Prizes!)
- **April 8th - ECLIPSE DAY!** Activities and presentation at Carlyle Lake Visitors Center and Outdoor Classroom - activity area opens at 10:00 AM., Presentation at 11:00AM.

**Viewing begins at 12:44PM**

Totality at 2:02PM (1 min 2sec)

Daylight returns starting at 2:04PM.

*The Dam will be the main viewing area. Public Invited! Corps of Engineers will promote on social media, website, and electronic signs.*

*\*\* private presentations set with Messiah Lutheran's Preschool on April 4 and 5 (morning)*

Presented by: Cheryl Brinkmann, Eclipse Ambassador

Contact: 618-207-0768 or [cheryl.brink813@gmail.com](mailto:cheryl.brink813@gmail.com)

No community chooses to host totality - the Universe chooses you.

# ECLIPSE CELEBRATION

with Cheryl Brinkmann  
Eclipse Ambassador

**Monday, April 8, 2024**

Outdoor Classroom, Carlyle Lake Visitor Center  
795 Lake Rd, Carlyle, IL 62231  
618-594-2484

10:00 AM | Exploration Activities  
11:00 AM | Eclipse Viewing Presentation  
12:44 PM | C1, 1st Contact\*  
2:02 PM | C2, 2nd Contact\* (Duration: 1 min, 6 sec)  
2:04 PM | C3, 3rd Contact\*, Daylight Returns

**SOLAR GLASSES PROVIDED**

*\*Viewing areas will be available at the Visitor Center and any open field sites around Carlyle Lake.*

Join Cheryl Brinkmann in learning about and viewing the Total Eclipse!

**FREE EVENT**





**HELP WANTED:** Volunteer to monitor social media and post our events. For more information on what this position includes, please contact Terry Menz at [outreach@riverbendastro.org](mailto:outreach@riverbendastro.org).

# ALCON 2024

## GOING TO KANSAS CITY FOR STARS AND ALL THAT JAZZ!

### SPEAKERS INCLUDE

- ★ Stephon Alexander, theoretical physicist, cosmologist, jazz saxophonist and author of *The Jazz of Physics*, a book that discusses the link between music and the structure of the universe
- ★ David Levy, comet hunter, amateur astronomer and science writer
- ★ Keivan Stassun, Professor of Physics and Astronomy, Vanderbilt University
- ★ Tim Russ, actor, musician screenwriter, director and amateur astronomer



### EVENING EVENTS

- ★ Gottlieb Planetarium
- ★ Linda Hall Library, Rare Books Room
- ★ StarBQ at Overland Park Arboretum
- ★ Powell Observatory
- ★ Awards Banquet

### VENDORS INCLUDE

- ★ DayStar Filters
- ★ Explore Scientific

JULY 17–20, 2024  
DOUBLETREE BY HILTON, OVERLAND PARK, KANSAS

Hosted by



## Preparation for the 2045 Total Solar Eclipse underway!

Anyone with connections in central Arkansas (especially near Little Rock, Hot Springs, Fort Smith, and Pine Bluff) or central Oklahoma (Tulsa and Stillwater) should reach out and secure a location. Totality along the center line near these locations is approaching 5 minutes in duration. It's on August 12th, a Saturday, so the crowds should be wild! Only 21 years to go!!

